



This newsletter is a joint effort from the following organizations:



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If you would like to receive this newsletter by email please send a request to:  
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## 2014 MSCA Summer Tour

Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association Summer Beef Tour and Trade Show, Tuesday, July 8, 2014 in Redwood Falls, MN.

Tour headquarters is at Redwood Area Community Center. Registration will be 6:30 - 8:30 a.m., with the first tour bus leaving at 7:00 a.m. and every 15 minutes. A continental breakfast will be available before the tour. Stops include Grant Breitkreutz, Redwood Falls; David & Clint Engen, Revere; George & Mike Landuyt; Curt & Chad Thram, Sanborn; Butch & Brandon Kerkhoff, Redwood Falls and Redwood Metal Works & Artex.

Registration fee is \$25 before June 15 and \$35 after June 15. The student price is \$20. An additional lunch ticket is \$10 an additional dinner ticket is \$15. Send payment to: Jeri Hanson, 37590 110th St, Comfrey, MN 56019

The tour is hosted by Redwood Area Cattlemen, for more information contact: Brandon Kerkhoff: 507-829-3410, Grant Breitkreutz: 507-430-0607, Clint Engen: 507-531-0279 or e-mail: [redwoodarea.cattlemen@outlook.com](mailto:redwoodarea.cattlemen@outlook.com) More details can be found online at: <http://www.mnsca.org/summertour.php>

## Southeast MN Forage Council & MFA Summer Field Day

Tuesday, July 15<sup>th</sup> • 5:00 p.m.

Host: Haz-Broy Farms, 27919 State Hwy 250, Lanesboro, MN 55949

\*plots are 1 mile NE on Hwy 250

**Mark Your Calendar!**

**Come and learn about:**

- **Small Plot Demonstrations - Jim Paulson, UMN-Extension**  
*Includes alfalfa grass varieties and cover crops for grazing.*
- **Tweak Your Alfalfa Management for Increased Profit - Brian Lang, ISU-Extension**  
*How to identify and correct sulfur deficiency in alfalfa. It's easy and profitable!*
- **Precision Planting Technology and Equipment Display - Adam Hazel**

**The event is FREE...**

For an adequate supper count, you are strongly encouraged to RSVP by July 8<sup>th</sup> to MFA by emailing [mfa@midwestforage.org](mailto:mfa@midwestforage.org) or calling 651.484.3888.

### Sponsors:

Ag Partners, AgStar Financial Services, Albert Lea Seed, All American Co-op, Benson Farm Service, Byron Seeds, CHS, Farmers Co-op Elevator, Groth Implement, Hamann Seeds/Redalen Seeds, Minnesota Ag Group, Minnesota Dairy Initiatives, SE Region, Preston Equipment, SEMA Equipment, St. Joseph Equipment, and Zabel Seeds.



## Native Grasses Resist Drought

John Zinn, USDA/NRCS Grazing Specialist

When the pioneers came to Southeastern Minnesota they observed tall grass prairies, sometimes taller than a person on horseback. Prairie plants such as big bluestem, switchgrass, and indiagrass dominated the landscape in some locations. Within a few decades of settlement, these plants were replaced by row crops, small grains and familiar forage plants from Europe.

Introduced species from Europe originated in a much cooler climate and were not well suited to the higher temperatures of July and August. Even today they dominate our pastures, but don't do well when the temperature gets higher than about 80 degrees. This creates a situation that some call "the summer slump".

Many native plants thrive under these conditions and can produce large amounts of forage during the hot summer months. Why then haven't they become more popular?



Here is a list of pros and cons for native warm season grasses and forbs.

### PROS:

1. Produce maximum forage during hot and humid weather
2. Deep root system makes them drought resistant
3. Deep root system allows plants to require much less soil fertility for high yields
4. Create habitats for other native animals, including threatened and endangered species
5. Improve soil organic matter and soil structure
6. Create habitat for pollinators

### CONS:

1. Seed cost higher than most cool season introduced species.
2. May take two to three years to establish.
3. Susceptible to weed invasion during establishment
4. Low yields for first two years possible
5. May require periodic burning

Consider trying native warm season species on a small area before using them more extensively. If you have questions about seeding mixes or management of native species please contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service Center.

## Are cover crops part of your forage supply?

Jim Paulson, University of Minnesota Extension Educator: Dairy

The topic of cover crops has been getting lots of discussion. Cover crops are not new but we certainly are looking at the benefits more. Green manure crops were an early method to add nitrogen to the soil. Ten to 15 years ago, planting a cover crop such as winter rye following harvesting corn silage was started to reduce erosion on mostly bare ground. We now realize the benefits of rooting depth to break up soil hard pan and how roots bring microbial activity to the soil. Cover crops can also fix nitrogen or scavenge nitrogen in the soil while adding organic matter, ground cover, improve water holding capacity and provide forage for livestock.

Cover crops work best when part of a whole farm cropping system. Cover crops can add additional forage supply to a livestock farm when harvested as hay, silage, baleage or grazed in rotation while still providing the other benefits as well. But the questions that need to be considered are what and when. What cover crops provide the best forage? When will I plant? When and how to harvest? And, will this be profitable for me?

A variety of cover crops can work for forage. Which one you use may depend on when you want to plant it. Probably the most common scenario is to plant a cover crop following small grain harvest or corn silage harvest. This would be planted sometime from the middle of August to the middle of September. A cool season crop such as a small grain would be a likely choice. Do you plan to graze it in the fall or let it grow until spring and harvest as a silage, baleage or hay?

Here are some possible mixes and planting strategies to consider:

- ◆ Plant 1-2 bu/acre of winter rye. This is a simple choice and usually a successful forage stand. Not the best for forage quality compared to other small grain choices. Grows tall but seldom out yields other choices.
- ◆ My first choice for a fall seeding would be to use a winter triticale. It combines the hardiness of rye and the forage growth of wheat. Triticale yields comparably to other cereal grains and is usually the highest forage quality due to being less stem and more leaf. Winter wheat could be substituted as well. Plant at 1-2 bu/acre at 1-2 inches deep. These mixes could be grazed in the fall or left until spring and harvested as a silage crop by Memorial Day and then same ground planted to corn for silage, soybeans or BMR sorghum sudan.
- ◆ If you want to plan to fall graze for a lower cost feeding, planting spring oats in combination with turnips; or even with tillage radishes, crimson clover and annual ryegrass can provide good yields of high quality forage. These forages are best grown in cooler seasons but will freeze out at the end of the growing season and not interfere in the spring. Seeding rates I would recommend are 1.5 bu/acre of oats and 1-2 lbs of turnips. If you want to add more to the mix, I would use 5 lbs of radish, 10 lbs of crimson clover and/or 10 – 12 lbs of annual ryegrass.
- ◆ So why do we use these combinations? For fall seeding, we want to use cool season species. With adequate moisture, these species will grow much better in the fall and will even tolerate a light frost. Warm season species, such as BMR sorghum-sudan grass, millets, berseem clover and buckwheat will do best planted when the soil temperature is above 65°F. An early to mid-summer seeding following a canning crop, after removing first crop hay on an old stand, winter killed fields, prevent plantings or other emergency forage situations possible scenarios. Suggested seeding rates are: 15-20 lbs for the millets and sorghum-sudan species, 20-25 lbs of buckwheat or 12-15 lbs of clover.

Mixes of different size seeds require certain considerations at planting. The best method is to use a drill with two different seed boxes and the ability to sow the small grain at an inch and a half deep while sowing the smaller seeds at a quarter to one half inch deep and pressed firmly. Research has been done to evaluate sowing both sizes of seeds together at one inch deep. Depending on soil type, this may or may not be successful. The heavier the soil type makes this a risky method because the smaller seed will not emerge from that depth.

Broadcasting seed of different sizes is affected by seed weight and density. Larger, heavier seeds tend to be distributed further from a cyclone seeder. Smaller and lighter seed does not carry as far and can be carried by the wind as well. The result can be streaking of seed with this type of seeding. Broadcasting seed, with or without light tillage, requires a higher seeding rate to obtain similar stand density. For these reasons, it is usually more successful to use a drill.

As always, working with your team of farm, nutrition and agronomy members will help to formulate a plan for your operation. These are guidelines to get started that hopefully will lead to a greater forage supply of your farm.

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## OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

Monday thru Friday 7:30- 5:30, Saturday 7:30-5:00, Sunday 10:00-2:00

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